

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7724

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 11208

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, EG

SUBJECT: SPEAKER OF PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY VIEWS ON MINBARS

REF: A. CAIRO 1120 B. CAIRO 10909

1. DURING NOVEMBER 5 CALL ON SPEAKER OF THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY SAYED MAREI BY CHARGE AND POLCOUNS, MAREI PROVIDED HIS REACTION TO CREATION OF "MINBARS" OR "FORUMS" WITHIN ARAB SOCIALIST UNION (ASU)(REFTELS). MAREI SAID THAT HE HAD, WHEN SERVING AS ESU SEC GEN 1972-3, FIRST USED TERM MINBAR IN CALLING FOR ASU TO ESTABLISH MORE DIRECT DIALOGUE WITH THE PEOPLE AND TO ENCOURAGE GREATER FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. RESULT HAD BEEN FORMATION OF SEVEN COMMITTEES TO ADVISE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, EACH ONE DEALING WITH SPECIFIC FIELD AND MADE UP OF CROSS SECTION OF MEMBERSHIP. THEY WERE GIVEN CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECTS TO DISCUSS AND MAJORITY AND MINORITY REPORTY REPORTS WERE THEN MADE TO CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

2. MAREI SAID HE HAD NOT DISCUSSED CURRENT CREATION OF MINBARS WITH PRESIDENT SADAT, BUT NOTED THAT HIS OWN PERSONAL VIEW WAS THEY WERE NOT A GOOD IDEA. HE NOTED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THUS FAR AMONG THE EIGHT CREATED, THERE WAS LITTLE DIFFERENCE IN PLATFORMS. THEY APPEAR TO BE MAINLY OF INTEREST TO INTELLECTUALS AND TO INDIVIDUALS SEEKING PERSONAL PUBLICITY.

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HE SAID THE LEFTISTS HAD DECIDED TO FORM THEIR MINBARS AND

LETTERS HAD BEEN SENT TO ASU REPORTING THE CREATING OF TWO FORUMS, ONE HEADED BY COMMUNIST KHALID MUHI AL-DIN AND THE OTHER BY ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-SHARQAWI, COMMUNIST EDITOR OF ROSE AL YOUSSEF. (MUHI AL-DIN'S MINBAR OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED IN PRESS NOVEMBER 6 ALONG WITH THREE OTHERS, BRINGING TOTAL TO TWELVE.) MAREI SAID, IN RESPONSE TO A QUERY, THAT APPROVAL FOR FORMATION OF MINBARS DID NOT NEED TO BE OBTAINED FROM ASU.

3. MAREI FURTHER OBJECTED TO MINBARS ON GROUNDS THAT THERE WAS ALREADY FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN ASU AND PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY AND THAT IF THEY ARE TO ACT AS POLITICAL PARTIES, THEN ONE SHOULD MOVE "DIRECTLY" TO ESTABLISHMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES. HOWEVER, HE WAS QUICK TO POINT OUT THAT HE STRONGLY OPPOSES CREATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES AT THIS TIME BECAUSE THEIR CREATION WOULD LEAD TO REAL PROBLEMS WITH WORKERS AND FARMERS, WHOSE MAJOR CONCERNS ARE FOR BREAD, BETTER SCHOOLS, HOUSING, IMPROVED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, ETC., RATHER THAN POLITICAL "FREEDOM." HE REPORTED THAT LABOR ELEMENTS HAD ALREADY MET AND REGISTERED THEIR OPPOSITION TO MINBARS, PREFERRING INSTEAD CONTINUATION OF "WORKING FORCES" ALLIANCE WITHIN ASU.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH ANNOUNCEMENT OF MUHI AL-DIN'S LEFTIST MINBAR WAS DELAYED, IT WOULD SEEM THAT MARXIST OBJECTIVES ARE WELL SERVED BY SETTING UP SOME KIND OF FRONT ORGANIZATION TO WORK WITHIN ASU, WHILE ALSO WORKING (ILLEGALLY) OUTSIDE IT TO CONDUCT THEIR ANTI-SADAT CAMPAIGN AS OUTLINED IN CPE'S AUGUST POLITICAL TESTAMENT (CAIRO 8243).

5. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE MARXIST INFILTRATION OF LABOR UNION RANKS, MARXISTS ARE FAR FROM BEING IN CONTROL OF LABOR MOVEMENT, AND INDEPENDENT VIEWS ON MINBARS FROM ESTABLISHED LABOR LEADERSHIP ARE NO SURPRISE. LABOR UNIONS' WEEKLY PUBLICATION, AL-'UMMAL, OF NOVEMBER 3, REPORTED LABOR LEADERSHIP VOTED TO OPPOSE PARTIES, BUT WOULD SUPPORT MINBAR NOTION ON CONDITION THAT IT WAS NOT CLOAK FOR RESUMPTION PARTY ACTIVITY.

6. IN TRUE EGYPTIAN FASHION, PROLIFERATION OF MINBARS HAS CAUSED PROLIFERATION OF JOKES. MAREI SPECIFICALLY REMARKED THAT EVERYONE IS NOW JOKING ABOUT THEM, AND THAT HE BELIEVES

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MINBAR IDEA WOULD COME TO NAUGHT. HOWEVER, EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE LID CAN BE PUT BACK ON PANDORA'S BOX WITH EASE. PGTMINENT EGYPTIAN INTELLECTUAL LOUIS AWAD WRITES IN AHAM NOVEMBER 5 THAT MOST OF MINBARS WILL "DIE STILLBORN, DIE IN INFANCY, OR LINGER ON IN POOR HEALTH," SINCE THEY ARE NOT BASED ON CLEAR PROGRAMS AROUND WHICH SUPPORTERS CAN RALLY, BUT ARE SIMPLY "REFLECTIONS EIGHER OF CLIQUES OF POLITICAL PROFESSIONALS OR OF THOSE SUFFERING FROM DICTATORSHIP COMPLES." IN OTHER

WORDS, MAJORITY OF MINBARS SEEM INEVITABLY FATED TO FAD AWAY  
INTO POLITICAL IMPOTENCE SOONER RATHER THAN LATER. UNLIKE MAREI,  
WHO BELIEVES TIME IS NOT RIPE FOR POLITICAL PARTIES, AWAD  
IS ONE OF LARGE GROUP LEFTIST INTELLECTUALS WHO FAVOR IMMEDIATE  
RETURN TO POLITICAL PARTIES.  
MAESTRONE

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